

## PRESS RELEASE

12-28-07

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **AMERICAN FRESH FOODS URGES CONSUMERS NOT TO PURCHASE GROUND BEEF UNDER QUESTIONABLE CIRCUMSTANCES AFTER TRAILER IS STOLEN FROM PLANT**

Fort Worth, Texas, December 28, 2007 – American Fresh Foods in Ft. Worth, Texas, is urging consumers **not** to purchase its ground beef under questionable circumstances. This precaution comes after the company reported, early the morning of December 27, the theft of one of its refrigerated trucks containing 14,800 pounds of ground beef products.

According to American Fresh Foods' officials, the stolen meat had been placed in a refrigerated truck and held on the plant's property. The product, a portion of which had been segregated as possibly affected with *E. coli* O157:H7, was being removed from fresh commercial sale.

"Consumers need to know that our meat products being sold through normal retail channels – such as grocery stores – are safe. Our primary concern, however, is for the safety of those people who may be persuaded to buy beef products under questionable circumstances," says Timothy Biela, Chief Food Safety and Quality Assurance Officer for American Fresh Foods. "Our first priority is their safety. We do not know how this product has been handled since it left our control. The stolen truck had only a limited supply of refrigeration fuel."

American Fresh Foods is working with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials and local and state law enforcement authorities to issue a public health alert and to recover the stolen product and vehicle.

The consumer products subject to the public health alert include:

- 2-pound approximate weight packages of "73/27 GROUND BEEF" bearing a sell-by date of "12.30.07" with production times between 14:27 – 15:28
- 2-pound approximate weight packages of "80/20 GROUND BEEF CHUCK" bearing a sell-by date of "12.31.07" with production times between 13:40 – 14:27
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of "85/15 GROUND BEEF ROUND" bearing a sell-by date of "12.31.07" with production times between 13:51 – 17:01
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of "90/10 GROUND BEEF SIRLOIN" bearing a sell-by date of "12.31.07" with production times between 13:49 – 15:35
- 1-pound approximate weight packages of "96/04 EXTRA LEAN GROUND BEEF, 4% FAT" bearing a sell-by date of "12.31.07" with production times between 14:25 – 17:22

Each package label bears the establishment number "EST. 13116" inside the USDA mark of inspection and the company name "American Fresh Foods, Ft. Worth, TX 76102" below the nutrition information. Each package has a net weight of approximately 1 to 2 pounds.

Bulk product also subject to this alert includes:

- 40-pound "net wt." box of "73/27 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK MAP"
- 260-pound "net wt." combo bin of "CHUCK 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK MAP"
- 370-pound "net wt." combo bin of "SIRLOIN 100% GROUND BEEF; REWORK"

Each bulk product label bears the establishment number "EST. 13116" inside the USDA mark of inspection as well as a date of "12-19-07" with the production information filled in by hand.

The consumer and bulk ground beef products were produced on Dec. 19, 2007.

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### **American Fresh Foods**

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The company asks that anyone, who may have seen or knows the location of the tractor trailer, immediately contact the Fort Worth, Texas, Police Department's Crime Stoppers hotline at 817-469-8477.

The tractor trailer, which bears an "Xtra Lease" logo on both side panels toward the rear of the trailer, is a 2000 Great Dane model with the trailer number Q61232. The truck has a Maine license plate number 1925071.

If a consumer has purchased American Fresh Foods' ground beef products under questionable circumstances, like in a parking lot or along the side of the road, Biela recommends the following: "Do not consume the product; but retain the packaging label, discard the product, and immediately report the incident to the American Fresh Foods consumer hotline number at 1-800-724-1136 (This toll free line will be available beginning Friday, December 28, at 9 a.m. central standard time.)."

"We really appreciate the public's help with this situation," says Biela. "Anyone with information leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprits and the recovery of the stolen vehicle will be appropriately rewarded."

Consumers with questions can call American Fresh Food's toll free at 1-800-724-1136 beginning Friday, December 28 at 9 a.m. central standard time. The toll free customer service line will be available throughout the week.

An additional resource is the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE (1-888-674-6854, available in English and Spanish from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday) or visit [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).

For the public health alert issued by the USDA, please visit [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News\\_&\\_Events/NR\\_122707\\_01/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_122707_01/index.asp)

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